

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3738

MADRID ALSO FOR AMB CARLUCCI

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) LISBON 3501; (B) LISBON 3651 (PARA 7); (C) LISBON 5026, NOV

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SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT UNIONS HAVE REJECTED AFFILIATION
WITH THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL,
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AS A RESULT OF INTERNAL VOTES ON UNION STATUTES, REQUIRED FOR

LEGAL RECOGNITION UNDER THE NEW LABOR LAW. THIS IS FIRST ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGUESE LABOR SCENE IN RECENT MONTHS. NONETHELESS, NON-COMMUNISTS HAVE LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE THEY CAN THREATEN WELL-ENTRENCHED PCP LEADERSHIP IN LABOR MOVEMENT. IN MEANTIME, LISBON TELEPHONE STRIKE MOST IMPORTANT OF SEVERAL NOTEWORTHY LABOR DISPUTES. END SUMMARY

1. TWO-WEEK LONG STRIKE OF 4,500 LISBON TELEPHONE WORKERS CONTINUES WITH NO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN SIGHT. ON JULY 2 GOVERNMENT ADOPTED A NEW, HARDER LINE TOWARD STRIKING WORKERS AS LISBON TELEPHONE EXCHANGES GRADUALLY BECOME INOPERATIVE DUE TO LACK OF SERVICING. REPORTEDLY 40 PERCENT OF CITY'S TELEPHONES CURRENTLY OUT OF SERVICE. STRIKE PRIMARILY OVER WAGE DEMANDS BY TELEPHONE WORKERS WHO CONTINUE TO REJECT GOVERNMENT'S WAGE OFFERS. INCREASING PRESSURES BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR ON STRIKING WORKERS BY UNIONS ALIGNED WITH INTERSINDICAL. COPCON TROOPS OCCUPIED LISBON'S TELEPHONE EXCHANGES ON JULY 2 TO PROTECT NON-STRIKING WORKERS AND STRIKE BEING TERMED COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY. (REFTELS A AND B)

2. LISBON LONGSHOREMEN HELD HALF-DAY WORK STOPPAGE JUNE 30 IN PROTEST AGAINST ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST THE UNION'S LEADERSHIP BY INTERSINDICAL'S DAILY RADIO PROGRAM. THIS IS LATEST INCIDENT IN A SIX-MONTH LONG DISPUTE OVER WORK RIGHTS, WITH LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION REFUSING TO INCORPORATE 600 NON-UNIONIZED "CASUAL" WORKERS INTO THE UNION ON GROUNDS THERE IS NOT ENOUGH WORK EVEN FOR CURRENT UNION MEMBERS. INTERSINDICAL, IRKED BY INDEPENDENCE OF LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION AND ITS REFUSAL TO AFFILIATE WITH THE CONFEDERATION, IS SUPPORTING THE NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS. (REFTEL C)

3. SOME 3,200 CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE SUPPLY AND REPAIR DEPOT (OGMA) AT ALVERCA COMMENCED A TOTAL WORK STOPPAGE JUNE 27 IN SUPPORT OF WAGE DEMANDS. UNION PACKAGE WOULD INCREASE PAYROLL COSTS ABOUT 35 PERCENT WITH BULK OF INCREASES GOING TO LOWER PAID WORKERS. BOTH USG AND FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY HAVE CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY OGMA OVERHAULS U.S. AND FRG MILITARY AIRCRAFT. THESE OPERATIONS, EACH ACCOUNTING FOR ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF OGMA'S OUTPUT, ARE AFFECTED BY THE SHUTDOWN.

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4. A PLENARY SESSION OF INTERSINDICAL APPROVED THE CONFEDERATION'S STATUTES ON JUNE 29, AN ACTION REQUIRED OF ALL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS BY THE NEW LAW REGULATING UNIONS. THE STATUTES PROCLAIM INTERSINDICAL'S "POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE" AND "INTERNAL DEMOCRACY," AND CALL FOR "THE SOLIDARITY OF ALL WORKERS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITALISM, RACISM, AND ALL FORMS OF EXPLOITATION BY INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM." THE

STATUTES DEFINE INTERSINDICAL'S INDEPENDENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATIONS, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO COOPERATION "SO LONG AS THIS CORRESPONDS TO ITS OBJECTIVES." OTHER MOTIONS OF THE PLENARY SESSION REAFFIRMED THE HOLDING OF A NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS JULY 25-27 AND ATTACKED THE MODERATE NEWSPAPER EXPRESSO FOR HINTING THAT MINISTER OF LABOR COSTA MARTINS MAY BE ON THE WAY OUT.

5. IN SPITE OF INTERSINDICAL'S LIP SERVICE TO POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE, THERE ARE INCREASING SIGNS THAT NON-COMMUNIST LABOR ELEMENTS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT PCP DOMINATION OF THEIR UNIONS AND INTERSINDICAL. ON JUNE 30, THE SOUTHERN BANK WORKERS UNION (WHICH INCLUDES LISBON) DEFEATED BY A 5 TO 1 MAJORITY KEY PROVISIONS OF THE STATUTES PROPOSED BY THE UNION'S MILITANTLY PRO-INTERSINDICAL LEADERSHIP. IN AN ALL-NIGHT ROWDY MEETING, THE 6,000 TO 7,000 UNION MEMBERS ATTENDING THE SESSION APPROVED STATUTES CALLING FOR "FREEDOM OF CHOICE" AND ALLOWING FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE UNION'S DIRECTORATE. WHILE THE SOUTHERN BANK WORKERS REMAIN AFFILIATED WITH INTERSINDICAL FOR THE PRESENT, A LEADER OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORKERS CLAIM THAT THE UNION'S CURRENT LEADERSHIP WILL BE REPLACED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. ON JUNE 28 THE IMPORTANT ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNION OF NORTHERN PORTUGAL (OPORTO) FORMALLY REJECTED AFFILIATION WITH INTERSINDICAL. AMCONSUL OPORTO REPORTS THAT OTHER IMPORTANT NORTHERN UNIONS REJECTING AFFILIATION WITH INTERSINDICAL INCLUDE THE HOTEL WORKERS, THE GARMENT WORKERS, THE OPORTO LONGSHOREMEN, AND THE CERAMIC WORKERS. WITHIN THE LARGE AND IMPORTANT TEXTILE WORKERS UNION, THE ISSUE IS STILL IN DOUBT. NORTHERN UNIONS WHICH DECIDED TO JOIN INTERSINDICAL INCLUDE THE FISHERMEN, GRAPHIC ARTS WORKERS, AND (AFTER A CLOSE VOTE) THE CENTRAL REGION GARMENT WORKERS.

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7. THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE PRIMARILY A REFLECTION OF INCREASED MILITANCY BY SOCIALIST PARTY SUPPORTERS, IN COOPERATION WITH FAR-LEFT EXTREMIST GROUPS. EVEN THE PPD IS SEEKING TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN LABOR THROUGH THE "DEMOCRATIC LABOR FORCE" (FORCA DEMOCRATICA DO TRABALHO - FDT) WHICH HAS RECENTLY OPENED AN OFFICE IN LISBON. WHILE THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE SOMEWHAT MORE ENCOURAGING, NON- COMMUNIST LABOR HAS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE POSING AN IMMINENT THREAT TO THE WELL-ESTABLISHED PCP DOMINATION OF THE KEY POSITIONS IN LABOR MOVEMENT. IT IS EXPECTED THAT INTERSINDICAL WILL UTILIZE THE NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS OF JULY 25-27 TO ESTABLISH ITSELF AS THE SOLE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED FEDERATION IN PORTUGAL. THUS WHILE NON-COMMUNIST LABOR MAY MAKE FURTHER GAINS IN THE NATION-WIDE INTERNAL UNION ELECTIONS WHICH ARE SCHEDULED TO BE HELD BY AUGUST 29, IT WILL REMAIN FACED WITH

AN ALREADY ENTRENCHED PCP-DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION.

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